the ladder

AUGUST

FIFTY CENTS

purpose of the

Daughters of BILITIS

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

1. Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications--this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.

2. Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.

3. Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.

4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

the Ladder

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THE LADDER is regarded as a sounding board for various points of view on the homophile and related subjects and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the organization.

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The Secret Garden

by
Lisa Ben

Evadne stood in her sleek, silk slip before the mirror in one of the dressing-rooms in Madel's Department store, deliberating whether or not to buy the sapphire-blue dress she had just tried on. She loathed Madel's, with its rows upon rows of mirrored cubicles, where customers tried on dresses without benefit of privacy because there were no doors. But today she had braved the impersonal stares of other women, and in the frankly curious gaze of some of their wide-eyed children, to try on the sapphire-hued gown she had admired in the window. She hoped Jeanne would like it. Jeanne was always careful to comment when Evadne wore something new but, Evadne wondered, had such comments grown merely perfunctory because of their three-year association? She knew the dress would attract admiring (from the butches) and envious (from the femmes) glances from the other girls at the party Saturday night, but this was of small importance. Evadne wanted Jeanne to be proud of her. She reached for her street clothes, but her hands froze in mid-air as she heard her name.

"Evadne!"

The voice propelled her backwards in time--then hurled her forward again into the here and now. She recognized Van's voice instantly. The interim of six years--or sixty, for that matter--would never erase it from her memory. Summoning all the poise at her command, she turned to look at Van. Dear Vanessa! A bit more silver in her greying hair, a few more lines around her ice-blue eyes, but still much the same as ever. Evadne was so stunned that for a moment she forgot her surroundings--even the fact that she was standing there in her pink, diaphanous petticoat.

"Vanessa Aydrens! What are you doing in this neck o' the woods?"

"I've been shopping for a new Easter outfit. Haven't seen anything I like yet, though." Van consciously averted her

gaze from Evadne as she spoke.

Evadne, suddenly aware of her deshabille, the filmy lace of her slip that revealed more than it concealed, felt the blood rush to her face. Her hands instinctively flew to her throat in an embarrassed gesture.

"Why don't I wait outside for you and we'll go have a spot of refreshment. Or do you have time?" Van asked. "It's 5:15. All the stores close at 5:30."

"All right. I hereby accept your kind invitation." Evadne managed to smile. "I want to purchase this blue dress first, though."

Van left and Evadne hurriedly put on her street clothes, thanking providence she had worn one of her most becoming dresses. Quickly, she ran a comb through her hair and put on fresh lipstick.

Van waited while Evadne bought the dress, and then fell into step beside her as she turned to leave the store. "Any particular place you care to go for a pick-me-up?"

Evadne thought a moment. "No-o, I can't think of one."

"There's a little place over on Marsden Court, not far from here, called 'The Embers'. Quiet, secluded, where we can talk without having to shout above the din. Sound okay to you?"

Evadne nodded in agreement. The spring breeze ruffled Van's hair as they walked along, reminding Evadne of windy days she'd spent at Van's home in Eden Heights. There was something eternally youthful about Van, despite the fact that she was no longer young. It pleased Evadne to see that Van kept pace with her easily. Evadne was not a slow walker. Presently, they entered the warm, smoky atmosphere of the bar. The older woman guided Evadne to a little table at the rear of the room.

"What will you have my dear?"

"A Manhattan," replied Evadne.

Van gave the waiter an order for a Manhattan and a Martini for herself, then turned to Evadne. "How times have changed! I can remember when you wouldn't even drink wine." Van shook her head in mock disapproval. "Or smoke, for that matter," she added as Evadne selected a cigarette from the smart silver case she held toward her.

"Well--like you say, times have changed, Van. Who'd ever think I'd be having cocktails with you here at 'The Embers' after all these years?"

Evadne's trite phrases sounded strange to her own ears. To cover the awkward pause while she thought frantically of what to say next, Evadne took a long sip from her Manhattan. "And how did your flower garden turn out on Eden Heights?"

Evadne mentally damned herself for blurting out this last question. Probably Van had forgotten that last time Evadne had visited her.....when they had said goodbye. Van had been planting flowers, her grey head bent lovingly over the freshly-spaded earth, her fingers tenderly tucking in the new plants-to-be.

"I won't say I wish I were dead," Evadne had whispered, dropping to her knees beside Van. "I just wish I'd never been born."

"You shouldn't feel that way just because I love someone else," Van had replied. "Do you know how much older I am than you?"

"No, and I don't care!" Evadne's tears, long held in check had dropped upon the young leaves of the newly-planted flowers.

"You should take up gardening, Evadne. When the flowers take root and bloom they make you feel as if you were a part of God, for it is you who have planted them and made them grow. It gives you faith in the future."

But this was small consolation to Evadne, who never had found it in her heart to believe in a personal God.

But Evadne remembered the earthiness and the scratch of

the tender plantlets she had carried home beneath her blouse from Eden Heights later that night. She had always wondered if Van had ever missed any of the plant cuttings.....

Evadne's mental journey into the past had taken only an instant but, fearful lest Van should notice, she asked quickly, "What are you doing these days? Still with Columbus Publishing?"

"I've been promoted to assistant editor. And how like you to remember about the flower garden!"

Van hadn't forgotten, then, Evadne thought.

"The forget-me-nots turned out especially well."

Evadne, knowing Van's penchant for puns and double-entendres, looked up intently for an instant, then re-experienced the familiar skipped heart-beat when van looked directly at her.

"You know," Van continued, "I hardly recognised you at first with your hair colored platinum blond. Let's hear about you. I understand you're with someone now. Are you happy?"

"Jeanne is very good to me," Evadne held up her left hand, an ornate diamond winked its corroboration. "She's district manager for Simmons Savings & Loan. I'm a lady of leisure now. Jeanne insists on it. Of course, I have a small income from the family estate. Both my parents were killed in an auto accident five years ago, or didn't you know?"

Van expressed the conventional phrases of belated sympathy, after which there was an uncomfortable silence.

And then, Evadne could not resist asking, "I suppose you are living with Denise?"

Van smiled sadly, "No, I could never persuade her to live with me. She drifted on to other affairs and, about three years ago, finally wound up with Juana Pelas. I believe you know Juana, didn't you?"

"Yes, she dated me a few times." Juana had been among the countless others with whom Evadne, in rapid succession, had endeavoured to salve her ego after Van's rejection of her in favor of the older, more worldly-wise Denise. "Nice girl. Drove an Oldsmobile when I knew her, and had that charming little place out in Belmont." Denise had done well for herself, Evadne thought. It angered Evadne to see Van's sad smile.

Impulsively, she put her hand on Van's arm. "Look, why don't we go to my place? It's not too far from here and you can have a bit of supper with me. Jeanne is out of town for a two-day visit with her mother, who is ill, and I'd really welcome a bit of company."

"I'd very much like to see your place....if you'd really like me to come," Van said.

The elevator soared soundlessly to the very top of the Fairvue.

"You didn't tell me you lived in a penthouse, Evadne. How nice for you! Sometimes I wish I had an elevator at Eden Heights."

Evadne, remembering the interminable steps that led upwards to Van's rustic retreat, smiled appreciatively. The elevator door opened and the two women stepped through into the apartment.

"May I take your coat?" On her way to the guest closet, Evadne switched on the hi-fi. The soft music of Mantovani's orchestra purred unobtrusively through the room. "Sit down by the window." She indicated a long, low modernistic divan. "There's a fairly good view from there--nothing like your Eden Heights view, though, I'm afraid."

Van watched Evadne's deft, carefully manicured hands as she prepared two cocktails at the built-in bar. Evadne, handing one to Van, took hers toward the kitchen.

"Amuse yourself, darling. Play whatever you want on the hi-fi. I know Jeanne left some filets in the freezer. I'll find us something to nibble on. Actually," Evadne confessed,

"I rarely eat at home when Jeanne's not here to prepare dinner. I either dine out or," she shrugged her shoulders lightly, "I just don't bother to eat at all." Evadne disappeared into the kitchen.

Van thought how Evadne's figure, almost too slender now, bore witness to this statement. She took a long sip of her drink and marvelled at the change in the girl. Van smiled to herself. Evadne was no longer a girl, Van was not displeased with what she saw now. Obviously, Evadne had "come up in the world". But she remembered the chubby, rather naive, completely uncomplex little--girl was the only word to describe her--Evadne had been six years ago, and wondered where she went. Now Evadne was a women, brittle, sophisticated, well-groomed (in a way she reminded her of a young Denise) and obviously accustomed to a more luxurious life. Van took note of the surroundings, at the severe, contemporary decor reflecting the ultimate in expensive taste, and contrasted it with the tiny, homey guest cottage Evadne had on Bluffton Drive in the suburbs when they had first known each other.....

"No more drinks for you, Van, you're getting mawkish." Van chuckled to herself and approached the hi-fi. What ever guided her fingers to the album of tangos from in back of the bottom shelf she didn't know. Some perverse quirk impelled her to arrange them in succession on the record-player. She turned the volume up--just a little. Soon the strains of "Blue Tango" throbbed through the room. The crash of a plate in the kitchen told Van her record selection had had its effect. So Evadne remembered, too.

Van strode toward the kitche. "Having troubles?" She queried.

Evadne was busy sweeping up the fragments of a broken plate. Her face was flushed, but Van couldn't be sure whether it was from the drinking, exasperation at having broken the plate, the heat of the broiler in the small kitchen, or the memories evoked by "Blue Tango".

I hope you don't mind my coming out to your 'kitch'.

(continued on page 16)

Exception to the Rule

By Lennox Strong

It is accepted in homosexual circles that publishing homosexual fiction is extremely difficult. Even after a gay novel does get into print the battle against poor or inadequate advertising, coupled with adverse critical reviews, often dooms the book to obscurity. However, an occasional exception to this unwritten rule appears. When a writer does have a successful career which includes extensive homosexual writing that is real news.

Mary Renault, an English novelist, whose real name is Mary Challans, has made a substantial contribution to both male and female homosexual fiction. Miss Renault was born in London, the daughter of a doctor. She studied at Oxford and then spent three years training to be a nurse. She was active as a nurse both before and during the war. The need for nurses during the wartime kept her active in this line long after she had originally intended to leave the field. Since the end of the war, Miss Renault has written full time, though she had three novels to her credit written on a part time basis during the late thirties and early forties. Miss Renault makes her home in South Africa with a friend whom she met in nurses training.

In 1939 Miss Renault published her first novel, PROMISE OF LOVE, which includes a Lesbian triangle between nurses as a sub-plot. It is remarkably well-written for a first novel and subtle enough to raise little outcry against the theme. Miss Renault's next venture into Lesbian fiction was in 1944 when she published FRIENDLY YOUNG LADIES in England. In America this book was entitled THE MIDDLE MIST and this time the main theme was Lesbian, very overt and very sympathetic, though the first novel was quite explicit in spots. The heroine of THE MIDDLE MIST is an Englishwoman named Leo who writes "Westerns" for a living. Leo lives on a houseboat near London with a nurse and enjoys the comfortable life as she manages to avoid any but male garb most of the time. The arrival of a younger sister of Leo's complicates the lives of all and the ending is art-

istically necessary but a bit too heterosexual to be convincing.

For some reason Miss Renault made an abrupt change in subject matter and in 1953 THE CHARIOTEER was published in England. THE CHARIOTEER is beautifully written and some have said it is one of the better treatments of male homosexuality. While I am in no position to judge from a subjective position, it is one of the best I have ever read, and I have read over 300 novels on the subject. It is the story of one young man's personal struggle to accept homosexuality-and he is successful.

In 1956 Miss Renault made an even more amazing change: she remained with male homosexuality for subject matter but changed her setting to Ancient Greece. THE LAST OF THE WINE was heralded in both England and America and for the first time Miss Renault was a very well-known author as well as a successful one. This sudden public notice and the excellent sales of her book are almost surprising when one realizes that a really well-written book is seldom a popular book and, of course, a book which treats of male homosexuality as the highest of all possible passions is usually more than a little unpopular as far as mass sales are concerned.

In 1958 there was once again loud and well-deserved acclaim for Mary Renault. Her second historical venture, THE KING MUST DIE, is a novelized account of Theseus, the legendary hero of Crete. As is expected, there is a liberal salting of homosexuality throughout the last half of the book, though not so much nor nearly as importantly as in THE LAST OF THE WINE. This year her publisher, Pantheon, is issuing the first American edition of THE CHARIOTEER.

Over a 20 year period one author has managed to put homosexuality or Lesbianism into five of her eight novels, theme, and one as background and atmosphere. It is apparent that if one is talented enough and intelligent enough to be discreet, then the question is how one writes not what one writes about.

LAST CHANCE

This is your last chance to subscribe to THE LADDER before the rates go up. As announced in last month's issue, the subscription rate is being raised to $4.00 per year effective September 1, 1959. We are giving our readers a chance to renew their subscriptions for not more than two years at the old rate of $2.50 a year, but to take advantage of this saving renewals must be received in our office no later than September 1. Rates to foreign countries, except Canada and Mexico, will be $5.00.

DOB TO MEET DURING MATTACHINE CONVENTION

The Sixth Annual Mattachine Convention to be held in Denver over Labor Day weekend should be one of the best yet.

On Saturday, Sept. 5, the luncheon speaker will be Dr. Lee V. Tepley, psychiatrist, discussing "The Psychological Aspects of Sexual Deviation". In the afternoon, a panel on "Civil Liberties and the Homophile" will present The Hon. Robert E. Allen, majority floor leader,

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DOB MEETING - Del Martin, president of DOB, and Phyllis Lyon, editor of THE LADDER, will be present at a meeting of women interested in the Daughters of Bilitis to be held Monday, Sept. 7, at 1 p.m. in the Cedar Room of the Albany Hotel, Denver. Women over 21 who wish to find out more about the DOB are urged to attend.

Colorado House of Representatives; William F. Reynaud, attorney and member of the board of the Colorado branch of the ACLU. Banquet speaker will be Dr. Omer C. Stewart, professor of anthropology, University of Colorado, who will speak on "Homosexuality Among the American Indians and Other Aboriginal Peoples around the World".

LESBIANA

110. MEMOIRS OF A NUN BY DENIS DIDEROT. LODON, ELEK BOOKS 1959. (TRANS. FROM THE FRENCH "LA RELIGIEUSE" BY FRANCIS BIRRELL)

THIS IS THE FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THIS CLASSIC LESBIAN NOVEL SINCE 1928. ALTHOUGH THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN IN 1760 IT IS REMARKABLY OVERT. AS IT WAS INTENDED TO SOUND AS IF A YOUNG UNTUTORED GIRL WAS THE AUTHOR, THE BOOK READS RAPIDLY WITHOUT THE INVOLVED STYLE USUALLY FOUND IN BOOKS AS OLD AS THIS. ANY LESBIANA COLLECTOR WILL WANT THIS AND A COMPLETE PLOT REVIEW CAN BE FOUND IN FOSTER'S SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE. PRIMARILY THE STORY OF A YOUNG NUN'S INNOCENT LOVE AFFAIR WITH ANOTHER NUN AND THEN THE CALCULATED CARESSES OF AN OLDER MOTHER SUPERIOR.

111. A WOMEN CALLED DESIRE BY RICHARD MARSHE. BERKLEY BOOKS, 1959 (RELEASED 1959 COPYRIGHT, 1950.)

ONE OF THE 4TH RATE TREATMENTS, HEAVY ON SEX AND LIGHT ON PLOT. BOTH OF THE WOMEN SEEM FAR UNLIKE ANY PLAUSIBLE LESBIAN. THE HEROINE COMES FROM A POOR BACKGROUND AND IS ADOPTED BY A RICH RELATIVE AND SO FORTH. ALONG THE WAY SHE EXPERIMENTS WITH A GIRLFRIEND BUT EVERYONE ENDS UP "NORMAL".

112. THE ODD ONES BY EDWINA MARK (EDWIN J. FADIMAN). BERKLEY, 1959.

THIS AUTHOR'S FIRST NOVEL UNDER THIS PSEUDONUM WAS "MY SISTER, MY BELOVED" AND THE TREATMENT OF LESBIANISM WAS UTTERLY REPULSIVE. NOW IN THIS NOVEL, THE AUTHOR IS VERY SYMPATHETIC TO THE MORE DESIRABLE TYPES OF LESBIANS AND HIS STORY OF THE LOVE OF JEAN AND SHERRI HAS SOME REAL MERIT. THE WRITING IS SLICK, AND THE PLOTTING IS FAR-FETCHED BUT THE MESSAGE IS PRETTY GOOD. NO CLASSIC, BUT THE UP BEAT ENDING AND SLUGS OF GOOD PROPAGANDA THROUGHOUT WILL APPEAL TO MOST LESBIANA READERS. (HE HAS LITTLE COMPASSION BUT A CLEAR AN UNBIASED HEAD HAS MERIT.)

mood miscellanea

I LOVE HER

ONE HAPPY THEME RUNS THROUGH MY LIFE,
SHIELDING ME FROM THE FULL IMPACT OF ADVERSITIES
AND GLORIFYING THE MEANING OF GOOD FORTUNE WHICH COMES MY WAY -
IT IS THE THOUGHT OF MY BELOVED.
JUST THINKING OF HOW SHE LAUGHS
OR WHAT SHE SAYS
OR THE WAY SHE LOOKS AT ME
MAKES MY LIFE FULL AND WONDERFUL.

THAT I FOUND HER AND THAT SHE IS
ALL THINGS I HAD DESIRED
IS A DREAM COME TRUE
AND A MIRACLE I CLING TO.

I WANT HER ALWAYS -
I NEED HER -
I LOVE HER.

CARLA MARTIN

PREFERENCE

TO MIGHTY LION,
HAPLESS KING,
LOUD OF ROAR
AND PROUD OF MANE -
I MUCH PREFER
THE LIONESS -
TENDER GRACE
AND GENDER SAME.

AGATHA MATHYS

SEE HOW I WRITE THEM DOWN
EACH WORD SO;
WHEN YOU HAVE THEM ALL
THERE WILL BE NOTHING MORE FOR ME TO GIVE.

JOANNE CONNORS

RESOLVE

DESTINED THEN TO LOSE, AM I?

THE EAGER, EARLY SEARCH FOR FREE, STRONG, ACTIVE LIFE
CONDEMNED TO HALF-WAY DEATH
BY RULE, AND WHAT THEY SAID WAS REAL
(THOUGH NOW I SEE THE UNREAL ALL ABOUT ME COMING TRUE);
THE LATER, HIDDEN QUEST FOR LOVE - TO HAVE AND GIVE -
FOUND, AND FOUND, AND STILL TO FIND;
DISCOVERED BEAUTY, SEEN IN THINGS - A JOY
INDEED (BUT NOT FOREVER);
THEN LAST, NOT LEAST - THE WORK TO DO,
IN SERVICE BOTH OF TRUTH AND LOVE.

DEFEATED ALL? AH, NO!
I'LL NOT TAKE DESTINY LIKE THAT
THOUGH GODS AND REASON MOCK ME!

ANONYMOUS

ON GIVING A GOLD HEART

DEAR NECROMANCER, MY BETTER PART
LET THIS SELF, BASE METAL, THIS SPURIOUS ONE,
IN YOUR LOVE'S CRUCIBLE
A RARITY BECOME,
TRANSFORM MY LADEN, LEADEN HEART,
I CHANGE BENEATH YOUR GAZE,
I GLEAM, I GLOW.
THIS TINY GOLDEN HEART,
LET IT GLEAM SO.

R.A. LORENCE

(Continued from Page 9)

It sounds as though you could use some help."

"Kitch! Evadne smiled. "How long it's been since I've heard that funny abbreviation of yours, Van! No one else ever uses it. Here," she handed Van some tomatoes, "you can peel these for the salad."

"Perhaps I should wash up, first," Van suggested.

"Of course! In there," Evadne indicated a hallway. "I'll wait 'til you get back before I put the steaks on to broil. Oh--it's the third door to your left," she added as Van left the kitchen.

Van, out of earshot of this last remark, walked down the hall. She paused to glance through a doorway to her left. Her eyes took in the luxurious wall-to-wall carpeting, the floor-to-ceiling mirror built into one of the walls, the simply-styled but sumptuous furniture. Twin beds, though. Van smiled wryly. "Wonder whose idea that was?" she mused. She walked on.

She opened the door and walked through, not expecting to come into the patio--a sort of private roof garden. Turning back, she found the door had clicked shut. Apparently the lock had been left on and could only be opened from the inside. "Damn!" she muttered, shuddering against the chill after being in the warm apartment. "It's cold out here! Well, I suppose Evadne will come looking for me soon enough when I don't return promptly." Van strolled to the edge of the wall and looked over. Cars bumbled through the streets far below--little black bugs with luminous eyes in a neon-lit jungle. "No one could hear me from this height," she thought.

Her eyes discerned, despite the dusk, a wall switch near the door. She pressed it. Instantly the patio was flooded with light. Van, glancing around her, noticed at once how different the patio was in contrast to the rest of the place. No fancy, ultra-sophisticated patio furniture here. A

much-used wicker chair stood in one corner. Rustic garden furniture--much like the old lounge and benches Van had at Eden Heights--were placed strategically around the plants and greenery. And then Van saw the window-boxes lined along the wall. She bent to examine them more closely. Flowers abounded there--the same varieties that grew on Eden Heights. Violets, pansies, forget-me-nots, marigolds, geraniums, they were all there. She noticed how some of them were planted, tight little clusters in the shape of a "V".

Suddenly, she felt a large drop of rain on her shoulder, then another and another. Then the clouds burst asunder with warm, spring rain. Vainly, she looked around for cover. There was none. Regretfully, she surveyed her trim woolen suit, limp now from the deluge. She strode to the door and pounded upon it. "Evadne! Evadne!" To her relief, she heard the latch click from inside.

"What are you doing out here?" Evadne's voice was calm, but her manner was flustered.

"I went through the wrong door. Brrrr! I'm chilled to the bone!"

Evadne looked at Van in dismay. "I'm terribly sorry, I told you the third door to your left, but I guess you didn't hear me." She motioned Van through the open door, flicked off the patio light-switch and pointed down the hall. "You'd better get out of those wet clothes. I have a blue velvet robe--a last year's Christmas gift from a couple of laddie-friends--that's too large for me. It'll probably fit you."

A few moments later, Evadne knocked at the bathroom door and handed the robe through to Van. "Hurry. I got tired of waiting for you and put the steaks on. They'll be overdone if I keep them in the broiler much longer."

When Evadne came in with the sizzling steaks, Van, snugly wrapped in the blue velvet, was standing with her back to the fireplace, hands thrust deep into the pockets of the robe--a characteristic stance Evadne remembered from long ago. She noticed how Van's capable-looking, wide shoulders amply filled out the robe, how the color enhanced Van's blue

eyes. "Why, it might have been made for you!" she said.

"I thought we'd have out bite to eat in the living-room--it's more informal. She set the food on a low table in front of the fireplace, a modernisitic one, sunk below the level of the floor. "You'll have to be satisfied with gas logs in this contraption. It doesn't hold a candle to your corner brick fireplace at Eden Heights." She smiled ruefully at her feeble pun.

They ate leisurely, stretching their stockinged feet out before the fire.

"Tell me more about Eden Heights, Van. Has it changed much since I was there?"

"The weeping willow tree in the front yard practically covers the whole area now," Van said. "The poodles love the shade in the summer time."

"Oh, do you still have all your dogs?"

"Yes, Pierre and Melinda are the same as ever. Happy is showing his age now--he's over 14--but he's still among the living.

Evadne felt a flow of contentment knowing the little dogs were all still alive. How often she had patted their wooly heads in the past--a poor substitute gesture for the affection she had never dared openly show Van.

They continued their conversation long after the salad and steaks had disappeared from the plates.

"It 's surprising," Evadne said, "how many subjects we can find to talk about despite the fact that we haven't seen each other for so many years."

"Perhaps that's the secret of it," Van answered.

"Jeanne never talks much, except about her work, or our social plans with friends, the little problems and decisions of every-day living. At times I think I'd go crazy without our collection of hi-fi recordings and the television

set. You know, sometimes whole evenings go by and we don't exchange more than a few words. Thank goodness we both share the same taste in music! 'The togetherness that needs no vocal communication' Jeanne calls it. I guess it just happens to people who've been together for awhile--a sort of settling down."

"And so you grow flowers on your roof garden," Van smiled understandingly. "How long have you two been together?"

"It'll be three years this August."

"Three years ago--just about the time I abandoned all hope with Denise." The two women glanced at each other significantly for an instant, then averted their gaze.

Too quickly, Evadne arose and began nervously clearing away the dishes. "I'd better put the coffee on."

"Here, I'll help you take the dishes out to the kitch," Van offered.

The clean, sharp odor of the soapsuds gave Van an odd sense of exhilaration as she stood by Evadne with a towel, ready for the newly-washed china and silverware passed to her. The coffee began to perk a merry tune on the stove.

Evadne kept her eyes steadfastly on the work at hand.

"If you'll pardon my saying so, it's much more cozy out here than in your living-room," Van said, "even without the hi-fi."

"We can have music here, too." Evadne reached across Van to turn on the small kitchen radio nearby.

A sudden wave of music enveloped them and the two stood as if transfixed. It was different when Van had selected the "Blue Tango" record and played it on the hi-fi. That was deliberate. But that the same music should now be heard on the radio at the random flick of a dial seemed a small miracle. Yet, there it was, the same provocative rhythm, the hauntingly wistful melody.

Van held out her arms. To Evadne it was like going home. Without knowing they intended to, but each by mutual, unspoken consent, they found themselves dancing to "Blue Tango", just as they had done so often six long years ago. Evadne closed her eyes. It was so easy to imagine this was six years ago and she was back with Van on Eden Heights.

The music ended.

"Guess I got rather carried away! " Van's laughter had a flase ring to it as she took up the dish towel and dried the last of the silverware. "Where do these go?"

"In the drawer there," Evadne pointed. "I think the coffee's ready."

Van noticed Evadne's hands shook as she poured the steaming black liquid into two fragile china cups. The radio blared forth a current rock-and-roll number and Evadne turned the volume down.

Van walked toward the hallway. "I'd better see if my clothes are dry. The coffee looks as though it'll stay hot for awhile."

When Van returned to the kitchen, clad in her somewhat rumpled but completely dry suit, she was glad to see that Evadne had not taken their coffee into the living-room.

"My clothes may not be neat, but they're dry. Thanks for the loan of the robe."

"You're quite welcome."

"Evadne....."

"Yes?"

"Why did you choose Jeanne?"

Taken aback by the direct question, Evadne made an attempt at light-heartedness. "I didn't. She chose me. I didn't want to make a career of just living in a house by the side of the road and being a friend to butches." Realising how

frivolous she sounded, Evadne paused, and then spoke the truth: "I knew I'd never fall in love again. I couldn't... after Eden Heights...and so....."

"Does Jeanne know how you feel?"

"I told her, of course. But she wanted me, regardless."

Van finished her coffee, glanced at her watch, then reached for her handbag. "I had no idea it was getting so late. The poodles will be famished."

Evadne arose from the table with Van and went to the guest closet for Van's coat. Together they walked to the door that led to the elevator.

"It's ironic that when we fancy ourselves in love we can't always discern between the lasting kind and the imitation variety. I wish I could say to you now, Evadne, 'come with me to Eden Heights. Let me take you away from all this.' All this!" Van smiled bitterly as her eyes took in once more the glamour and luxury of the penthouse. "My little cottage would be a poor substitute for it!"

"Even if this place were a tent I couldn't go with you, Van," Evadne replied. "Surely you realise that!"

"I know, I know," Van sighed. "But--can't we still be friends? I mean--to see each other once in awhile. I don't mean that the way it sounds, but...to part like this and not keep in touch.....seems so....."

"Final?" Evadne supplied the missing word. "Yes, it is, Van. Yet for it to be otherwise would be disastrous." She pressed the elevator button with her slender, well-manicured forefinger.

"You spoke of 'abandoning all hope' with Denise," Evadne continued. "Total acceptance of defeat lies not in merely 'giving up', but in wholehearted, irrevocable compromise."

Evadne gave her hand to Van and the two stood silently, hands clasped, for the brief interval it took for the elevator to arrive. Van entered and pushed the automatic

"down" button.

"Goodbye, Evadne."

"Goodbye, Van."

The doors closed with a metallic clang and Evadne listened to the elevator descending. Then she walked slowly down the hall to her patio--her Secret Garden. Far, far below she could barely make out Van, a small speck now. Evadne watched until Van, mingling with other small specks, was no longer discernible. Idly, she plucked a violet from its "V" formation in the window box, closed her eyes and inhaled its delicate fragrance.

"NOT BEING A MEMBER OF DOB, ONCE MY FIRST YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION IS UP I'M AFRAID THE LADDER WON'T BE WORTH $4.00 TO ME - NOR TO VERY MANY OUTSIDERS, AND HERE'S WHY.

"YOU ASK WHY PEOPLE DON'T SEND IN MORE COMMENTS ON THE CONTENTS. THE COMMENTS WOULD BE AS REPETITIOUS AS THE CONTENTS AND THE CONTENTS ARE REPETITIOUSLY BAD. THE LADDER SHOULD NOT BE A BUNCH OF AMATEURISH WRITING AND MOST OF IT IS. THE 'FICTION' PER SE, IS USUALLY AN ARTICLE OR LECTURE WRAPPED UP IN FICTITIOUS OVERTONES, BUT DOESN'T RING TRUE OR INTERESTING IN EITHER WAY. I HAD HONESTLY HOPED TO DISCOVER NEW WRITING AND NEW WRITERS WHO WOULD HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, AND NOT ALWAYS 'LESBIANA'. THE POETRY IS THE DREAMY TYPE I WROTE WHEN I WAS 17, AND I CAN'T APPRECIATE IT UNLESS MOST OF YOUR READERS DEMAND IT BECAUSE THEY ARE THE YOUNG, CALLOW TYPE.

"I AM MOST SYMPATHETIC TO THE AIMS OF DOB AND HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE LOCAL (NEW YORK CHAPTER) LIBRARY. . .BUT GETTING $4.00 FOR THE LADDER IS ASKING FOR CHARITY IN THE NAME OF COSTS AND

PROGRESS, AND THAT IS NOT FAIR TO YOUR READERS. DON'T THINK I WANT THE LADDER TO GO OUT OF BUSINESS. IF IT BECOMES A PUBLICATION OF PROFESSIONAL CONTENTS WORTH $4.00 I'LL BE DELIGHTED TO CONTINUE SUBSCRIBING. I STILL HAVE EIGHT OR NINE ISSUES TO GO TO MAKE UP MY MIND, SO YOU HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO MAKE THE IMPROVEMENTS."

J.R.G., NEW YORK

HOW ABOUT A CONTRIBUTION FROM YOU, J.R.G., IN THE FORM OF A STORY, ARTICLE OR POETRY? THE LADDER IS IN THE POSITION OF BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE, FOR THE MOST PART, ONLY FROM THAT MATERIAL WHICH IS SENT IN. - ED.

* * * * *

"SOME FRIENDS OF OURS WERE TALKING TO US ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION AND MAGAZINE. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION YOU CAN SEND US.

"I MYSELF FEEL THAT I WOULD BENEFIT IN UNDERSTANDING MORE BY JUST READING EACH ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE. (THERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS WE HAVE THAT WE CAN'T DISCUSS OR FIND OUT ABOUT BY READING SUCH MAGAZINES AS YOU FIND ON THE NEWSSTAND.)

"IS THERE AN ACTIVE CLUB BRANCH IN THIS AREA? IF WE SHOULD HAPPEN TO BE IN SAN FRANCISCO COULD WE ATTEND YOUR MEETINGS?"

J.V. AND J.M., OREGON

THERE IS NO CHAPTER OF THE DOB IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE HOMOPHILE WOMEN IN THAT AREA "ARE NOT YET READY" FOR THE ORGANIZATION. THE SCARCITY OF RESPONSE FROM OREGON AND WASHINGTON WOULD INDICATE THIS IS TRUE, THOUGH WE, FROM PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE, RATHER DOUBT IT. ANY COMMENTS FROM YOU UP THERE?

ANYONE PLANNING TO VISIT SAN FRANCISCO IS WELCOME TO ATTEND DOB FUNCTIONS, OR JUST TO DROP BY THE OFFICE AND VISIT A WHILE. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND, HOWEVER, THAT YOU WRITE US BEFOREHAND. THE OFFICE IS NOT ALWAYS OPEN, BUT IF WE KNOW YOU ARE COMING WE CAN MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO GET TOGETHER. - ED.

"FIRST OF ALL, MAY I CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR MAGAZINE WHICH I FEEL IS THE LEAST CLUTTERED WITH SELF-PITY AND INSTEAD CONTRIBUTES TO THE INTELLIGENCE OF YOUR READERS RATHER THAN OUR WALLOWING DEDICATION TO SELF - WHICH IS APPARENTLY OUR TENDENCY.

"SECONDLY, ALTHOUGH YOUR NEW YORK CHAPTER IS NEW, IT MIGHT BE ADVISABLE TO SEND ALONG A NOTE TO WHOEVER IS IN CHARGE THAT THE MEANS OF CONTACTING THE OFFICE ON BROADWAY WOULD BE IMPROVED BY THE SYSTEM OF SMOKE SIGNALS. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS I HAVE TRIED TO REACH THEM BY PHONE AND HAVE HAD NO ANSWER.

"THIRDLY, I WONDER IF YOU HAVE PUBLISHED IN YOUR 'LESBIANA' COLUMN A REVIEW OF TWILIGHT', A CREST PAPERBACK BY PAULA CHRISTIAN. CONSIDERING THE POLICY OF YOUR MAGAZINE I THINK MANY OF YOUR READERS WOULD BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT A 'NORMAL APPROACH' TO A LESBIAN BOOK IS ON THE STANDS AS OPPOSED TO THE USUAL BEAD-COUNTING, CHEST-POUNDING TYPE OF NOVEL."

Y. MACM., NEW YORK

THE NEW YORK CHAPTER GENERALLY HAS A REPRESENTATIVE IN THE OFFICE AT 1133 BROADWAY ON THURSDAY EVENINGS. IF PHONE CALLS PRODUCE NO RESULTS WE WOULD SUGGEST A SHORT NOTE. REMEMBER, ALL THE WORK IN NEW YORK IS VOLUNTARY, AS IS IT ELSEWHERE. AND WORKING WOMEN HAVE ONLY SO MUCH SPARE TIME.

"EDGE OF TWILIGHT" WAS LISTED AS NUMBER 72 IN THE "LESBIANA" COLUMN OF THE FEBRUARY, 1959, ISSUE OF THE LADDER. -ED.

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"I'M VERY GLAD YOU ARE RAISING YOUR RATES, FOR I HAVE LONG FELT THEY WERE TOO LOW, FAR TOO LOW, IN VIEW OF THE COST OF PAPER AND PRINTING THESE DAYS. I FEEL CERTAIN THAT ALL YOUR SUBSCRIBERS WILL BE GLAD TO PAY THAT SMALL EXTRA.

"I BELIEVE MY SUBSCRIPTION HAS ANOTHER YEAR TO RUN AND I DON'T FEEL LIKE RE-SUBSCRIBING AT THE LOW RATE, SO I'LL JUST WAIT A WHILE AND RE-SUBSCRIBE AT THE HIGHER RATE.

"WE BOTH LOVE THE COVER ON THE JULY ISSUE. IT REMINDS ME OF JAPANESE BRUSH WORK. IT HAS AN ESSENTIALLY FEMININE DELICACY.

"ALSO TERRIBY GLAD TO HAVE THE CONRAD PARAGRAPHS RE-WRITTEN, VERY MUCH EASIER TO MAKE SENSE OF THIS WAY. THOUGHT THE DIALOGUE IN 'SUMMER STORY' BY DIANA STERLING WAS VERY NATURAL.

"BACK TO MY PET PEEVE AGAIN, TOO LITTLE 'LESBIANA'. ASK THROUGH 'READERS RESPOND' AND SEE IF YOUR READERS DON'T USE THAT COLUMN TO FIND BOOKS."

B.G., KANSAS

WELL, READERS, DO YOU? -ED.

* * * * *

"I NOTICED AN 'EDITOR'S NOTE' IN YOUR JULY ISSUE OF THE LADDER COMPLAINING OF THE LACK OF COMMENTS ON YOUR ARTICLES AND STORIES. MY IMMEDIATE REACTION WAS INDIGNATION. HERE'S A GROUP OF PEOPLE (I SAID TO MYSELF) WHO INSTEAD OF SITTING AROUND (MYSELF INCLUDED) TALKING ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AND WHAT SOCIETY'S ATTITUDE SHOULD BE, ARE ACTUALLY DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT. AND ONLY A FEW PEOPLE WRITE IN AND GIVE THEIR THANKS. YEP, I WAS PRETTY MAD ABOUT THE WHOLE THING. IT SUDDENLY, AND YOU MUST ADMIT BRILLIANTLY, OCCURED TO ME THAT IT WOULD TAKE APPROXIMATELY FIVE MINUTES FOR ME TO PERSONALLY WRITE 'THANKS'."

P. P., NEW YORK

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"I HAVE BEEN MEANING TO WRITE TO YOU TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH I LIKE 'LOVE IS NOT LOVE' BY JODY SHOTWELL (THE LADDER, APRIL, 1959.) IN MY OPINION IT IS THE BEST PIECE OF FICTION THAT HAS BEEN PRINTED IN THE LADDER SINCE I SUBSCRIBED.

Dr. Vera H. Plunkett
Chiropractor
465 geary street ORdway 3-3243

"ALSO, FLORENCE CONRAD'S SUMMARY OF OPINION ON THE WOLFENDEN REPORT IN THE SAME ISSUE WAS ABOUT THE BEST PIECE OF REPORTING I'VE SEEN IN THE MAGAZINE."

J.F., KANSAS

MOOD THOUGHTS

Come the long dark nights when you walk alone 'mong the vast halls of the city. Stone walls are about you, and the fog creeps in, and the fog-horns moo in the distance. In the dim swirls of fog you search for an essence of kindness, a smile, but only the stone walls meet you. And even the strangers that pass are seen--as a mask. A mask of type; cabman, shopper, or engineer--perceived from the mask that is your own.

You walk on and on, restless in the night's quickening surge, midst a jungle of houses and moldy grey fences. Fences driftwood-silver, shutting out all but fog, moonrays, and the morrow. And you feel walled in by walls not quite your own.

Perhaps you fumble in your purse for a mirror, and stop a moment under a street lamp. Whence the mask? Where the barrier? Are they within? Remember last week at the gathering, the maze of stiff and frightened faces? You saw the frozen fears in a frame of shattered glass--dark eyes, haunted eyes mirroring desires of your own, yearning to find an understanding, a rapport!

Brace up kid, walk faster--this is not the bitter end! Next time, reach in and bring it out. Ayeee, don't be so bashful--SMILE!

- Bonnie Dureen

COMING NEXT ISSUE - The long awaited report on the questionnaire circulated by the DOB in June, 1958. The data collected is fascinating - and startling. This is a "must" issue for all.

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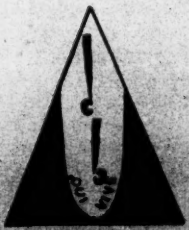
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